

Statement on the Death of John Cardinal O'Connor

May 3, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Cardinal O'Connor. For more than 50 years, he reached out with uncommon fortitude to minister the needs of American Catholics. From his first Philadelphia parish to soldiers on the battlefield, from the carnage of Bosnia to the tragedy of AIDS, he also sought out and served those most in need. His lifelong journey

of faith was our Nation's blessing. From his distinguished career as a Navy chaplain, to his determination to give voice to the poor and marginalized in New York and across America, the courage and firm faith he showed in his final illness inspired us all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and all who loved him.

Remarks at Central High School in Davenport, Iowa

May 3, 2000

Hello. I think we should give Barb Hess another hand. She did a good job on her speech. *[Applause]* And your principal, Mr. Caudle, give him another hand. *[Applause]* And your great Governor, Governor Tom Vilsack, I'm glad to be here with him. Thank you. I also want to thank the Jazz Band and the Marching Band for playing. You did a great job today. Thank you very much.

I am glad to be here. I want to say I appreciated meeting at least two of your student leaders, Kelly Witt and Ricky Harris—thank them for—*[applause]*. And I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson, Attorney General Tom Miller, Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge, and the director of education, Ted Stilwell, for joining us today. And Mayor Yerington, thank you for welcoming us back to Davenport. And the other Quad City mayors are here: Mayor Leach of Moline; Mayor Ward of East Moline; and Mayor Mark Schwiebert of Rock Island. I think I pronounced that properly, and if I didn't, he can reprimand me later. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank your superintendent, Jim Blanche, for making us welcome here. And since we're here for construction purposes, to talk about better school buildings, I'm glad to be joined by the president of the Building and Construction Trades Union, Mr. Ed Sullivan. So thank you all for making me feel welcome.

I love this community. I came here in late 1992 on a bus with Hillary and with Al and Tipper Gore right before our election. Then I came back in 1993 after the terrible flood, and

I watched you come back from that. And today I want to talk about another kind of building.

I'm in the process of going around the country for 2 days; we just left Owensboro, Kentucky. And I want to do two things. I want, first of all, to make this trip an opportunity to show America how good the young people of our country are, and how much they are learning in our schools, and how bright their future is. But the second thing I want to do is to point out what challenges are still out there if every young person in America is going to have a world-class education.

And one of the things that we know is that you are not the only group of young people in school facilities that are either overcrowded or too old or both. And if we want learning to occur, we have got to give all of our students the facilities they need.

Now, this is a beautiful old school. It's even older than the high school I went to, which was built in 1917. I've been to the top floor. I've seen the physics lab. I went into a biology class. I went underneath the bleachers here, in the locker room. I saw where you have your meals in the cafeteria, which was built in the '85 extension. And I have been given a briefing by your principal on how you're going to handle the modernization.

But what you need to know is there are people all over this country who are in situations even more severe. In the city of Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. In the city of New York, there are still buildings